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ABSTRACT

By the year 2000, one in three persons in the United States will belong to a minority group. This booklet aims to help adult educators promote awareness, understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the cultural diversity of the five major cultural groups in the United States: American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians and Pacific Americans, Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and White Americans. The booklet contains a section on the values and practices of each cultural group, including family, communication styles, view of the individual, social interaction, materialism and success, concept of time, concept of health, religion and spirituality, and volunteerism. The values discussed are traditional values and would apply to most, but not to all older people in a particular group. Suggestions on how to build bridges among individuals from different cultures are included in the booklet. Contains 16 references. (KC)

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ED 409 466

AARP Minority Affairs

Appreciating Diversity

a tool for building bridges

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American Association of Retired Persons

AARP

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Injustice anywhere
is a threat to justice everywhere.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

We are now at a point where
we must decide whether we are
to honor the concept of a plural
society which gains strength
through diversity, or whether we
are to have bitter fragmentation
which will result in perpetual
tension and strife.

CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN

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Appreciating Diversity

a tool for building bridges

AARP

Introduction

The United States is a nation of immigrants. All of us are either immigrants or descendants of immigrants including Inuits and Native Americans whose forebears crossed from Siberia to Alaska around 30,000 B.C., on a land bridge that now lies beneath the icy Bering Sea. They gradually moved south and east from Alaska as the glaciers of the Ice Age melted.[1] For more than a century, most of the immigrants came from Europe. In the 1960's, the U.S. opened its doors to the rest of the world, particularly Third World countries. More than one million immigrants, mostly from Asia and Latin America, arrive each year, thus producing a multi-cultural society and dramatically altering the face of our nation.[2]

In the 1990 Census, the White[3] population in the U.S. was 75%, African American 12%, Hispanic/Latino 9%, Asian and Pacific Islander 3%, and American Indian/Alaska Native 1%. By 2050, the White population is projected to be 52%, African American 16%, Latino 22%, Asian and Pacific Islander 10%, and American Indian/Alaska Native over 1%.[4]

In 1980, fewer than one in five people living in the U.S. belonged to a racial or ethnic minority group. In 1990, one in four people in the U.S. belonged to a minority group.[5] By the year 2000, one in three persons in the U.S. will belong to a minority group. Most of the new workers between 1990 and 2005 will be non-white or Hispanic white. Non-Hispanic workers will make up the largest segment of the new entrants but only 46.3% of the total growth.[6]

1 John Elson, **The Great Migration,** Time Magazine, Special Issue, Fall, 1993, Vol. 142, No. 21, p. 28.

2 The Editors, **America's Immigrant Challenge,** Time Magazine, Special Issue, Fall, 1993, Vol. 142, No. 21, pp. 3 and 6.

3 The term "White" generally refers to whites of non-Hispanic origin, such as persons of European, Middle Eastern and North African descent, and is the term used both by the EEOC and the U.S. Census in referring to this ethnic group.

4 U.S. Bureau of the Census, **Census Bureau Releases 1990 Census Counts on Specific Racial Groups,** U.S. Department of Commerce News, June 12, 1991, p. 3.

5 American Red Cross, **Demographic and Workforce Statistics,** Serving the Diverse Community: Participants' Handouts, June 1992, p. 3.

6 AARP, **Ethnic Background and Gender,** America's Changing Workforce, Statistics in Brief, March 1993, p. 4.

Purpose

The purpose of this booklet is to help promote awareness, understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the cultural diversity of the five major cultural groups in the U.S.: American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians and Pacific Americans, Black/ African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and White Americans.

This booklet contains a section on the values and practices of each cultural group including family, communication styles, view of the individual, social interaction, materialism and success, concept of time, concept of health, religion/ spirituality, and volunteerism. The material has been developed with input from AARP staff and Minority Affairs Specialists from each respective ethnic group.

Please note that immigration, history, location, place of birth, length of stay in the U.S., education, socioeconomic factors, and many other factors have produced striking differences between ethnically similar communities and even among members of the same community. The values discussed in this booklet are traditional values and would apply to most, but not to all older people in a particular group.

The best approach therefore, when dealing with any person is to:

- Treat that person as a unique individual
- Ask questions for clarification
- Listen and take a cues from the way an individual communicates verbally (choice of words, tone and volume of voice, pace of speech)
- Observe and take cues from the way an individual communicates nonverbally (degree of physical closeness, eye contact, facial expression, body movement)

Suggestions on how to build bridges among individuals from different backgrounds and cultures are included on page 36 of this booklet.

American Indians/Alaska Natives

Many American Indians do not like to be called "Native Americans," as this term was given to them by the U.S. government. They prefer to be called "American Indians" or addressed by their tribal names such as Navajo, Chippewa or Cherokee.[7] There are 505 federally-recognized tribal entities and an additional 365 state-recognized tribes and bands. Data published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1988 showed that there are 304 federal American Indian reservations and that over 150 tribal languages are still spoken.[8]

American Indians/Alaska Natives are the smallest among the four major minority groups in the U.S. They comprise 0.8% of the total population. The 1990 Census showed that the American Indian/Alaska Native population increased by 37.9 percent between 1980 and 1990, compared with a 9.8 percent growth rate for the total population. This rate of increase is subject to possible correction for under- or over-counting. Over 50 percent of American Indians/Alaska Natives live in Oklahoma, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Alaska, and Washington.[9]

The American Indian/Alaska Native population is extremely diverse. Each tribe is different from all others. An individual may differ greatly from other members of the same tribe. Two major

7 Gary Weaver, **Law Enforcement in a Culturally Diverse Society,** FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, September 1992, p. 6.

8 Timothy Thomason, **Counseling Native Americans: An Introduction for Non-Native American Counselors,** Journal of Counseling and Development, March/April 1991, Vol. 69, p. 321.

9 See note 4.

variables are: degree of traditionalism and degree of acculturation to the U.S. mainstream.[10]

Some American Indians live on urban communities and others reside on Indian reservations. The urban Indians move from place to place, city to countryside and back again, giving them the opportunity to learn the dominant society's way of doing things. This contributes to the urban Indian's loss of native culture after some time. On the other hand, the isolation of reservations has enabled many reservation Indians to retain their traditional culture.

8

A study of 174 households on the Blackfeet, Sioux, and Navajo reservations showed four types of households: ***isolated***, ***traditional***, ***bicultural***, and ***acculturated***. In the isolated family, the home was located in a remote area of a reservation and there was strong preference for use of the native language. Traditional families had bilingual members and actively participated in tribal ceremonies. Bicultural families engaged in traditional ceremonies but preferred to speak English. Acculturated families spoke English as the primary language and family activities approximated Anglo American norms.[11]

Older American Indians and Alaska Natives have maintained much of their traditional culture. Some speak little or no English. Many reservations are located in isolated, rugged areas characterized by harsh climate, and lack of inadequate safe water facilities or waste disposal. In many areas of Alaska, roads are nonexistent, requiring the ill or injured to be airlifted to health care facilities.[12]

Although the American Indian/Alaska Native population is extremely diverse, there are some values that cut across all tribes. As with all other cultural groups, these values are subject to individual interpretations and therefore, may *not apply to all*. The best approach is to treat each person as a unique individual.

10 See note 8 above.

11 See note 8.

12 Indian Health Service, **A Comprehensive Health Care Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives,** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, introductory page.

American Indian Values/Practices

The following information was taken from the personal knowledge and experience of Don Perrot, an Anishnabe medicine man and a Minority Affairs Specialist, and Ruth Corcoran, a Minority Affairs Specialist, and from articles from the following sources: *The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, The Journal of Counseling and Development, The Indian Health Service Report, The Journal of American Indian Education,* and a publication titled *Health Behavior Research in Minority Populations:Access, Design, and Implementation* put out by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health.

Family The extended family is an integral part of American Indian life. It includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, and cousins. Extended family often share a common dwelling. Family members feel responsible for each other. American Indians value their elders' wisdom and guidance. The tribal leader is usually an older person.

Communication Style Individuals from these groups are retiring and not assertive; keeping their emotions controlled. Silence does not always mean assent. When under stress in an unfamiliar situation, American Indians remain quiet and watch carefully.

View of Individual/Social Interaction Most Indian tribes treat the individual with respect. Tribes give members the freedom and responsibilities for themselves and their actions. American Indians are described as "group oriented with individual goals." Therefore, when conducting educational programs, it is important to stress benefits to the community first, and the personal benefits second. Respect is a critical part of social interaction. For example, many American Indians avoid eye contact because direct eye contact denotes lack of respect.[13] Hospitality is another

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13 David Ray Baines, MD, **Issues in Cultural Sensitivity from the Indian Peoples,** Health Behavior Research in Minority Populations, National Institutes of Health, Washington, DC, p. 231.

value that is characteristic of most American Indians. For example, free food and lodging is provided to relatives, friends, clansmen, tribesmen, and other visitors who unexpectedly drop by or come for a visit.

Materialism/Success Sharing is more important than accumulation. American Indians, in general, are not concerned with saving or building a "nest egg."[14] They usually work to meet present needs. Individual acts of generosity and sharing are respected by the community. However, many American Indians are now beginning to save for the future.

10

Concept of Time "Indian culture does not have a clock or fixation with time, and often there is little or no future orientation."[15] "Time is considered to have a circular character like the season. It is not rigidly structured and there never is a lack of time; events begin when everyone is present."[16]

Concept of Health The American Indian view of health as well as aspects of living evolved from Indian religion. "Health is viewed not just as the absence of disease, it is harmony with oneself, including mind, body, spirit, harmony with others, and harmony with one's surroundings or environment. The concept of spirituality or religion is, therefore, inseparable from one's health."[17]

"Traditional Indians believe there are three kinds of diseases: natural (cuts), supernatural (curses), and white illnesses associated with European culture (tuberculosis and diabetes). Consequently, there are three types of healing: illnesses only traditional healers can treat; illnesses only western medicine can treat; and those that both methods can treat."[18]

Treatment by medicine men often includes religious rituals and involves the patient's family. The healing ceremonies are designed to resolve conflicts among the patient, family, and

14 Alonzo Spang, **Counseling American Indians,** JOURNAL OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION, p. 2.

15 See note 13.

16 See note 8, p. 322.

17 See note 13, p. 230.

18 See note 13.

tribal members, which address the emotional aspects of the patient's condition. To varying degrees, American Indians and Alaska Natives incorporate traditional folk medicine into their healing practices while at the same time relying on current medical practices.

Religion/Spirituality There is, among most American Indian/Alaska Native groups, a strong belief in a supreme being and life after death.[19] There is also a generalized belief in a guardian spirit which accompanies each person.

American Indians have reverent feelings for all living things. They believe that growing things on earth and all animals have spirits or souls, and that they should be treated as humanely as possible.

19 E. Daniel Edwards and Margie Egbert Daniels, **Family Care and the Native American Elderly, Minority Aging, Essential Curricula Content for Selected Health and Allied Health Professionals,** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, p. 146.

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Asians and Pacific Islanders

The term "Asian Pacific" is used collectively to identify people who are either Asian or Pacific Islanders. The lumping together of Asians and Pacific Islanders (APIs) must be done with extreme caution because this group is not at all homogeneous. The word "Oriental" is not an acceptable term to most Asians. Reference to nationality of origin, for example, Chinese American or Japanese American is preferred.[20]

APIs are the third largest and the fastest growing minority group in the U.S. The 1990 Census showed that between 1980 and 1990, the API population increased by 107%, from 1.5% (3.5 million) to 2.9% (7.2 million), far outpacing the growth of African Americans (13.2%) and Hispanics (53%). Ninety-five percent of the API population was Asian and 5% was Pacific Islander. The API population is extremely diverse, composed of more than 60 ethnic groups from more than 20 countries. The largest Asian groups in the U.S., in descending order, are Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Asian Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese. The largest Pacific Islander groups are Hawaiian, Samoan, Tongan, and Guamanian.[21]

In 1990, the top ten states by API populations were California, Hawaii, New York, Texas, Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, Virginia, Florida, and Massachusetts.[22]

While there are differences in value orientations among and within API groups, there are also some commonalities which can help others enhance their understanding and sensitivity about APIs.

Some of the information contained in the following pages was taken with permission from Chareundi Van-Si's book *Understanding Southeast Asian Cultures: Their Cultural Traits and Implications in Casework Practice* (Asian American United Press, 1992); from the personal knowledge and experience of Sue Sakai,

20 See note 7.

21 See note 4.

22 See note 4, Table 5A.

Minority Affairs Specialist and Jane Pang, former Minority Affairs Specialist and now member of the Board of Directors; and Nonata Garcia, Senior Program Specialist, AARP Minority Affairs. The following cultural values would apply to *many API elders* and *newly arrived API immigrants.* Other Asian Americans who were born, raised, and educated in the U.S. have adopted the cultural values of the general society.

Asian/Pacific Islander Values/Practices

Family The Asian/Pacific Islander family is extended; parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, and cousins live together. It is a common practice for children to live with their parents until they marry. In some Asian cultures, an extended family includes the ancestors or the dead who are honored with a "shrine" in their family's homes.[23] In Hawaii, it is not unusual to see three generations of a family living together in one household. Taking a vacation usually involves visiting and staying in the homes of relatives or friends rather than in hotels, which are used as a last resort. There are few facilities for the elderly because sending older relatives to a home for the aged is considered shameful. However, times are changing and reverence for the old is waning, especially among the younger population.

Communication Style The Asian way of communication is indirect, circular, and subtle. Being too direct means challenging authority and indicates a lack of respect.[24] Calling a person by his/her first name, especially someone who is older or in authority, denotes disrespect. To show respect, people are addressed by their status (Ms., Mrs., Mr.), or by rank or professional title (Dr., General, Professor, etc.).

In many Asian cultures, body language can denote respect or

23 Chareundi Van Si, **Understanding Southeast Asian Cultures: Their Cultural Traits and Implications in Casework Practice,** Asian American United Press, Oakgrove, Oregon, 1992, p. 57.

24 See note 23 above, pp. 27 and 54.

disrespect. For example, direct eye contact is considered rude and disrespectful, especially when talking with a person in authority or to superiors; downcast eyes signify attention or respect; pointing a finger at someone's face or calling a person with an upward forefinger are also signs of disrespect; crossing legs with soles of the feet visible to another person is considered an insult to the other person. Slapping someone's back as a sign of greeting should be avoided unless that person is a good friend.[25] Pacific Islanders touch and kiss as a sign of friendship and affection, and may engage in playful slapping, punching, or pinching to attract attention or to make a point.

View of Individual/Social Interaction Each individual is unique and recognized in accordance with age, role, status, education, wealth, and wisdom. A structural order exists which allows a person to know his/her position within the family and the community. For many APIs, an individual's disgrace affects the whole family as well, and therefore, every effort is made to avoid actions or behavior that may bring "shame" to the family.[26]

Filial piety, smooth interpersonal relations, and reciprocity are common values that influence many Asian and Pacific Islander social interactions and communication styles. APIs are taught when very young to obey and respect authority or someone who is older. This behavior is considered a reflection of filial piety. In meetings, for example, most APIs show respect by waiting for their turn to speak, or do not speak at all unless they are asked.

APIs tend to avoid disagreement or conflict to achieve smooth relations. Many APIs take an indirect approach in their conversations and dealings, particularly when involved with unpleasant matters. It is important not to cause unpleasantness in social relationships.[27]

Reciprocity refers to psychological indebtedness. Any assistance or favor received by an individual is considered an obligation that the individual who benefits must repay. To fulfill this obligation, many APIs give gifts such as souvenir items from their country of

25 See note 23 above, p. 50.

26 See note 23, pp. 20 and 21.

27 See note 23, p. 20.

origin or invite the benefactor to their home or to a restaurant for lunch or dinner. If an API individual invites a person or persons to a meal at a restaurant, he/she usually pays the bill. Going "Dutch" is not the norm.[28]

Volunteerism is usually related to helping relatives and friends. Many APIs, especially those who were born, raised, or educated in the U.S., are now beginning to get involved in more general volunteer activities.

Materialism/Success "Success is measured in terms of accomplishment, correct behavior, and status."[29] Because of family/ group orientation and interdependence, sharing, borrowing, and lending are an important part of many APIs' way of life.

Concept of Time To most APIs, time is related to events. For example, family events or emergencies are viewed as more important than events unrelated to them personally. Time is flexible; there is always another time.[30] Making appointments (e.g., appointments with a doctor) is something new to many APIs. In most countries where APIs come from, except big cities, patients just drop in for consultation or treatment and wait until their turn comes. Many APIs in the U.S. have now learned to respect time and appointments.

Concept of Health The traditional belief is that illness is caused by an imbalance, extremes of hot and cold or dry and wet. In some Asian cultures, foods and medicines are classified as hot and cold. Treatment of illness caused by "hot" conditions are treated with "cold" medicines and food to restore balance, and vice-versa. Traditional Chinese believe in the concept of ***"Yin"*** and ***"Yang."*** Yin represents dark, cold, wet and feminine aspects. Yang represents bright, hot, dry, and male aspects. Treatment, therefore, calls for the balancing of these two opposite forces.[31]

28 See note 23, pp. 50-51.

29 See note 23, p. 27.

30 See note 23, pp. 16 and 58.

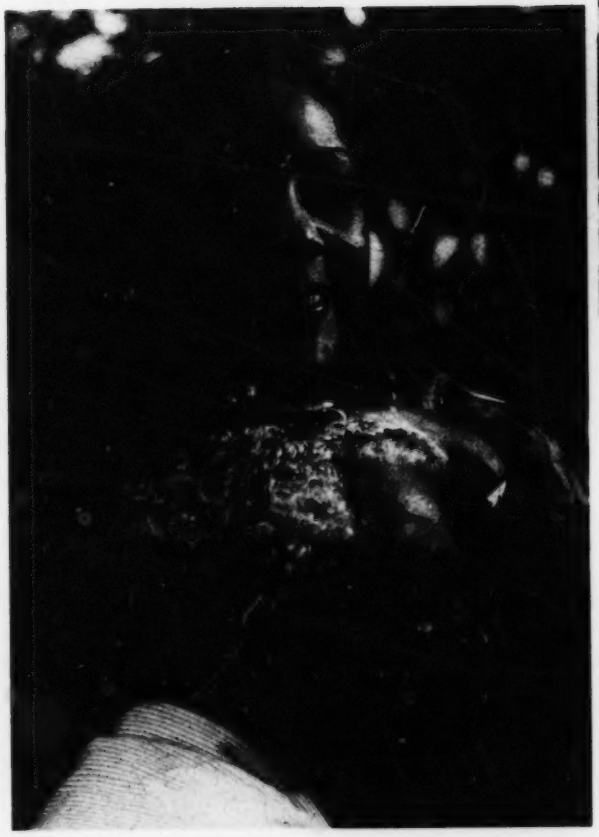
31 Lisa Bray, et. al., **Social and Cultural Considerations in the Treatment of Hypertensives,** Prepared for the Asian/Pacific Islander Task Force on High Blood Pressure Education and Control, June 1984, p. 3.

Some traditional health practices among APIs include acupuncture, use of herbs, exercise *(Tai Chi)*, meditation, and acupressure. Some APIs use folk/psychic healers, masseuses, and poultices. Southeast Asians use acupuncture, and folk healing such as ***"Cao Giao"*** (scratching the wind), and ***"Giac Hoi"*** (cupping). The application of Cao Giao and Giac Hoi produce black marks on the body that can be misconstrued as a sign of physical abuse by those not familiar with these practices. In Samoa, the ***"fawai"*** (medicine men) employ dances, incantations, herbal remedies, and therapeutic massage to treat illness. Tongan traditional folk healers use herbal medicine and rituals to cure disease.[32]

Religion/Spirituality Religion plays an important role in the lives of many APIs. Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism are very much part of the traditional Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian way of life. It is customary for Cambodian and Laotian males to enter a monastery for a short period of time in their lives.[33] The Chinese from Taiwan and Hong Kong are still influenced by these three religions and by Christianity as well. Some Koreans in the U.S. follow the Methodist, Episcopalian, or Catholic religions or the Church of Sun Myong Moon. The majority of Filipinos in the United States practice Catholicism. Other Asians follow Protestant and Muslim faiths.

32 Nancy Morioka-Douglas, **"Asian Pacific Island Report," Impact of Culture on Health Care of Ethnic Elders: A State of the Art Report**, p. 15.

33 See note 23, pp. 13-14.



Black/African Americans

Black/African American refers to persons of African ancestry and many people from the West Indies and the Caribbean (Belize, Jamaica, Trinidad, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and others). The terms "Black" and "African American" are used interchangeably. The latter is the official term used by the U.S. Census of 1990.

According to a survey of 1,003 African Americans ages 14 and over, conducted from October to December of 1992 by Burrel/Yankelovich for AARP, the most preferred term to describe this particular group is "Black" (38%), followed by "African American" (30%), "Afro American" (20%), "Negro" (4%), and "Other" (5%). Each generation of African Americans has different preferences:[34]

- Age 50+ generation strongly prefer "Black" (49%)
- Age 30-49 generation moderately prefer "Black" (42% vs. 31% African American)
- Age 21-29 generation are undecided (three choices are all within 31-32%)
- Age 14-20 generation strongly prefer "African American" (46%)

Black/African Americans are the largest ethnic group in the U.S., comprising 12.1 % of the total population. Between 1980

34 Burrell/Yankelovich, African American Monitor, Presentation to AARP with a Special Emphasis on African Americans 50 Years and Older, April 22, 1992, p. 13.

and 1990, the Black population increased by 13.2% compared with a 9.7% increase in the total population. About 80% of the Black population reside in southern and industrial states, particularly in large cities.[35]

Like the other four major groups, the Black/African American group is heterogeneous. During the 20th century, members of this group have come from different countries, represented various cultures, languages and dialects, and include both native and foreign-born individuals. They also reflect a variety of skin colors from "white" to "darkest black."

The following cultural values were contributed by Frances Hawthorne, Joe Sanders, Josie Vann, African American Minority Affairs Specialists; and from publications listed as footnotes. These values may apply to many but not all African Americans in the U.S.

Black/African American Values/Practices

Family Among African Americans, the extended family is extremely important; it includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives. It is not unusual for children to be raised by any of these family members. The extended family is a source of emotional, moral, and other support during difficult times. Families are historically headed by males, but increasingly headed by females parenting on their own. Approximately 41.8% of black households were headed by a female in 1987; 68% of these included children.[36] According to a recent Census Bureau report, 65% of homes with children are headed by single parents.[37] Today black family ties are still strong, although physical closeness and support may no longer be as readily available due to scattered housing and employment.

35 See note 4.

36 Diane Robinson Brown, Ph.D., **The Black Elderly: Implications for the Family, Minority Aging: Essential Curricula Content for Selected Health and Allied Health Professions,** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, p. 280.

37 **Two-Parent Families Show Gain,** The Washington Post, Oct. 16, 1995.

Communication Style African Americans are very proficient in non-verbal communication. African Americans greet strangers and friends with a handshake or ritual hand clasp, and relatives and close friends with a hug. African Americans are likely to nod in agreement, but a nod can mean other things as well. Sometimes silence may indicate disinterest, but it also can mean intense, interested listening.

View of Individual/Social Interaction African Americans stress respect for elders; for example, children traditionally do not call adults by their first names as is the custom among Anglo Americans. This is considered a sign of disrespect. Consequently, children address adults as "Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr., Aunt, Uncle, or Cousin."

African Americans come together in support of each other through numerous social and service organizations with national affiliations. These include fraternal orders, sororities and fraternities, family reunions, and social clubs. These groups grew when African Americans were not allowed to participate in public events and activities by laws of segregation.

Most Black Americans are people-oriented. This tendency is shown by the fact that many African-American students choose careers in the helping professions, such as teaching, social work, psychology, communications, and health related areas. However, African Americans, like all cultural groups, are represented in all types of careers and professions.

In the past, African Americans focused on helping one another, family, relatives and neighbors. They are just now beginning to become involved in formal volunteer work in the greater community. Eighty-one percent of the African Americans age 50 and over interviewed by Yankelovich Partners Inc. felt strongly a need to become more involved in the life of

their neighborhood and community.[38]

Some African Americans tend to prefer novelty, freedom, and personal distinctiveness. This is reflected in their writing, music, dance, styles of clothing, and sometimes hair styles. African Americans believe your word is your bond. Individuals who break their word lose the respect and trust of the community.

Materialism/Success African Americans feel a strong sense of self-determination, a belief that success can be achieved through hard work. They believe in sharing; gifts are given to show appreciation for a favor or kindness received or to show encouragement or acknowledge achievement.

African Americans place a high value on education. Many believe that a good education is the doorway to the American way of life. Families often sacrifice financial and property resources to send their children to college or for advanced vocational training. They also believe all people are created equal. However, many believe that they do not have equal opportunities to succeed.

Concept of Time Meetings and events often start later than the appointed time. This is an African-American custom that allows participants to relax and socialize prior to starting the meeting or activity. This practice however, is waning and is seldom applied to individual appointments in the professional arena.

Concept of Health Beliefs and practices regarding health care are influenced by education, income, historical experience, length of immigration, spiritual values, and degree of acculturation. Some African Americans use alternative health care, which may be attributed to their historical experience of limited access to medical care due to poverty and discrimination. African Americans often have an attitude of acceptance towards good or bad health, which is rooted in strong religious belief.

[38] See note 34.

Religion/Spirituality African Americans have deep convictions about religion and spirituality. The Black church serves as a strong social support system for many families, with church members often serving as a close-knit extended family which comes to the assistance of members and non-members in need. This has been evident since 1800s. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Black church was the center of worship, social participation, information, and recreational activities in the community, particularly since segregation laws prevented African Americans from participating in public and community social and entertainment events.

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Hispanic/Latino Americans

The word "Hispanic" is used by the Bureau of the Census as an ethnic label; its origin is the 1978 Office of Management and Budget definition, "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race."[39] Not all persons of Spanish origin like to be called Hispanics. Traditionally, "Hispanic" has been preferred by the Mexican people who originally settled in Colorado during the 16th century. On the West Coast and in Texas, Mexican American is generally preferred by those with Mexican ancestry. Many Mexican Americans with ***"mestizo"*** heritages, i.e., a mix of Spanish and Indian blood, refer to themselves as La Raza, meaning "the race." The term "Latino" is preferred by those from Central America. Others prefer to be called by their nationality of origin, such as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, or Cubans. The terms Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably.

The 1990 Census found that Hispanics represent about 9% of the total U.S. population. Between 1980 and 1990, the Hispanic population increased by 53%, compared with a 9.8% growth rate for the total U.S. population. Hispanics in the U.S. include Mexican Americans (62.8%), Puerto Ricans (11.1%), Cuban Americans (4.9%), South/Central Americans (13.8%) and others (7.6%). About 85% of Hispanics live in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. Over 50% of all Hispanics live in California and Texas.[40]

39 Gerardo Marin and Barbara V. Marin, **Issues in Identifying Hispanics,** RESEARCH WITH HISPANIC POPULATION, Applied Social Research Series, Volume 23, p. 20.

40 See note 4.

Many Hispanics/Latinos arrive in the U.S. with the idea of returning home someday; usually once they have worked and saved enough money to start a business in their homeland. Many others blend into the mainstream, decide to stay, and become naturalized U.S. citizens who exercise their right to vote. They are typically the well-educated or from middle/upper middle economic classes. Older Hispanics who immigrate often find it difficult to learn the dominant language and to assimilate into the new culture. They typically retain a lifestyle similar to that of their homeland.

Hispanics are heterogeneous with regard to cultural background, socioeconomic status, degree of acceptance in the dominant society, immigration experiences, color, and acculturation. There are, however, cultural values that cut across the different Hispanic groups.

The following section was derived from two books: Research with Hispanic Population and Hispanic Elderly in Transition: Theory, Research, Policy and Practice, from journals noted on page 38, from Dr. Daniel Gallego and Adelia Cisneros, AARP Minority Affairs Specialists, and from Gloria Doty, AARP staff.

Hispanic Values/Practices

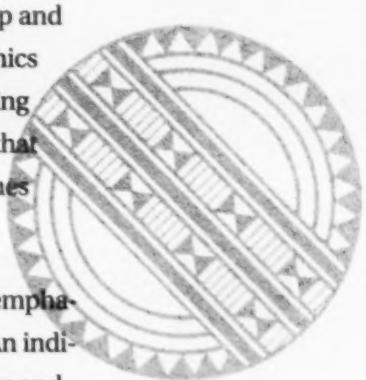
Family Individuals feel a strong identification with and attachment to their nuclear and extended families. Strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity among members of the same family are important cultural values.[41] The Hispanic family includes blood relatives, and others like children's godparents in baptism, called ***"compadres"*** and ***"comadres."***

Traditional Hispanic families are patriarchal, with the oldest male considered the head of the family. Everyone in the family is expected to respect his authority and obey his decisions. The cultural value of ***"machismo"*** (masculinity) defines the Hispanic man as sexually knowledgeable and fearless in interactions with

41 See note 39, p. 13.

others. Machismo also refers to being a good provider and protector of the family. This cultural value puts an emphasis on the authority, respect, and control over resources by the males in the family. Machismo, however, is less traditional among urban, higher-income, better or well-educated Hispanics, those who are born in the U.S., and those who are acculturated.[42] In the U.S., as well as in Latin America, Hispanic women are increasingly entering the work force, which dilutes the traditional machismo role and values.

Communication Style Many Hispanics express their opinion in an indirect, circular way. They use their hands and body language to get their points across. Touching people while talking is totally acceptable. Embracing and kissing are symbols of friendship and admiration between close friends. Unlike many non-Hispanics who prefer to stand apart from the person they are interacting with, Hispanics prefer closeness. They are less likely to feel that their personal space has been invaded when a stranger comes close to them.[43]



View of Individual/Social Interaction Hispanic cultures emphasize the need for smooth and pleasant social relationships. An individual who is ***"simpatico"*** behaves with respect toward others and strives to achieve smooth interpersonal relationships. ***"Simpatia"*** is defined as a "general tendency toward avoiding interpersonal conflict, emphasizing positive behaviors in agreeable situations and de-emphasizing negative behaviors in conflict. ***"Respeto"*** (respect) is another cultural value that inhibits an individual from questioning or disagreeing with authority figures (physicians, religious leaders, teachers). Individuals are also expected to show respect for certain groups of persons (the educated, the rich, the aged).[44]

In a study of older Hispanics conducted for AARP's Evaluation Research Services Department, about 46% of the total respondents had never volunteered, compared, to 21% of the general population. However, the same number (46%) said they currently provide

42 Joyce Palmquist, **Factors Influencing Service Participation,** AGING AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: HISPANIC AMERICANS, A TRAINING MANUAL FOR NON-HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS, 1994, p.15.

43 See note 39, p. 15.

44 See note 39, p. 12.

help for family members, friends, or neighbors who are 50+ so they can remain in their homes and communities. More than seven in ten (72%) said they were at least somewhat likely to volunteer if a program existed in their communities to help people remain in their homes as they get older.[45]

A Latino's orientation is on *becoming*, with a goal of developing all aspects of the self as an integrated whole. Hispanics expect to be known as a total person *(personalismo)* before addressing personal matters or formal tasks. A good working relationship is characterized by ***"confianza"*** (trust), ***"respeto"*** (respect), ***"orgullo"*** (pride), and ***"dignidad"*** (dignity and self-worth).[46]

Materialism/Success The more property one has, the higher the prestige and respect from the community. Hacienda owners were always called *"Don,"* a term similar to "Sir" bestowed upon the landed elite. Within the context of the extended family, Hispanics are taught the value of cooperation, mutual assistance, and sharing whenever necessary, as opposed to withholding resources.

Concept of Time Hispanics tend to be more flexible regarding time, particularly for social events that do not demand punctuality. This allows Hispanics to feel they are on time even if they arrive after the appointed time; the meeting starts when everyone gets there. Hispanics place greater value on the quality of interpersonal relationships than on the length of time in which they take place.[47] However, many Hispanics in the U.S. have adopted this nation's business standards and practices, which has significantly affected their traditional mentality toward time.

Concept of Health In Hispanic culture, diseases are grouped in the following categories: "hot and cold imbalance, dislocation of internal organs, magical origin, other folk-defined diseases, and standard scientific diseases." The traditional concept of hot-cold relates to the qualities of substances rather than actual physical temperature. Illnesses caused by cold, especially the night air,

45 **Getting Your Message to Older Hispanics,** AARP Horizons, Vol. 4, No. 5. October 1994, p. 5.

46 Steven Applewhite, Ed., **Cross-Cultural Understanding for Social Work Practice with the Hispanic Elderly,** Hispanic Elderly in Transition: Research Policy, and Practice, Greenwood Press, 1988, p. 11.

47 See note 39, p. 16.

include earache, stomach cramps, rheumatism, headaches, and chest cramps. Hot illnesses, due to heat generated within the body, include skin rashes, fever, and hoarseness.[48]

Some older Hispanics consult ***"curanderos"*** (folk healers), ***"yerbistas"*** (herbalists), or ***"consejeros"*** (indigenous counselors). Traditionally, Hispanics believe in the power of herbal medicine, with specific herbs identified for each ***"mal"*** (illness). Still, other older Hispanics follow the Western medicine model. An accepting (fatalistic) attitude towards illness may delay a person's action in seeking medical help. Some Mexican Americans believe that the family is responsible, not the physician, for telling a person if he/she appears ill. It is also important that the family be involved in the treatment process.

Religion/Spirituality Spirituality and religious beliefs are very important in Latino life. A large number of Hispanics were born Catholics. However, there are some who have shifted to other religions. The language itself has religious implications, for example, ***"Adios"*** means both "good-bye" and "to God." Hispanics have strong beliefs in the possibility of miracles and an afterlife that rewards good deeds. They respond to personal or natural catastrophes quickly with prayer. Spirituality increases with age. The family is very important in providing the continuity of religious practices at home. For instance, when a sick family member can no longer attend religious services, communion is brought to the bedside. The blessing which is given by making the sign of the cross in front of the blessed, can be given by any family member, but is usually given by parents and accompanied by the words ***"Dios lo bendiga"*** (God bless you), ***"vaya con Dios"*** (go with God), or ***"que Dios lo lleve con bien"*** (God protect you as you go away), and are synonymous with "good-bye," "have a good day," or "have a safe trip." Traditionally, children kneel before their parents each time they are blessed.

29

48 Mary Ann Hautman, **Folk Health and Illness Beliefs,** NURSE PRACTITIONER, July/August 1979, p. 26

White Americans

Between 1980 and 1990, the White population increased by only 6% as compared to 13.2% growth for African Americans, 37.9% for American Indians/Alaska Natives, 107% for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 53% for Hispanics.[49]

Contrary to commonly held perceptions, White Americans are as diverse as the other four groups. History shows that White Americans come from many different European heritages: German, Irish, English, Italian, French, Polish, Dutch, Scottish, Swedish, British, Polish, Portuguese, Norwegian, Russian, and others.

Many White Americans find it difficult to identify with the culture of their ethnic origin. This is due to the fact that white culture "is so interwoven in the fabric of everyday living that Whites cannot step outside and see their belief, values, and behavior as creating a distinct cultural group."[50] White culture is defined as "the synthesis of ideas, values, and beliefs coalesced from descendants of white European ethnic groups in the United States."[51]

Many White Americans, particularly those who were born in the U.S., generally share common traditional values which include liberty, democracy, and constitutional rights; humanitarian values such as charity; and individualism and enterprise. These values are declared to be responsible for America's overall success.[52]

The following values were taken from several sources indicated on page 35. They are provided as background information and would describe most but not all White Americans. Each individual is unique and should be treated accordingly.

31

49 See note 4.

50 Judith Katz, **The Sociopolitical Nature of Counseling,** The Counseling Psychologist, Volume 13, No. 4, October 1985, p. 617.

51 See note 50 above.

52 Charles Cozic, Book Ed., **American Values: Opposing Viewpoints,** 1995, Greenhaven Press Inc., San Diego, CA, p. 13.

White American Values/Practices

Family Culturally, the traditional White American family is predominantly nuclear; composed of a husband, wife, and children with the husband as the breadwinner. Mothers sometimes stay at home or work outside the home. Both husband and wife play active roles in raising their children.[53] Historically, the White American family was extended, but modernization has provided younger adults with opportunities to declare economic and social independence from their parents.[54] At age 18, many children leave the family home and strike out on their own. Although a three-generation family is not common, intergenerationally, there is still a high degree of closeness and willingness to help one another.

Communication Style The communication style of White Americans is linear and direct; characterized with direct eye contact. Lack of eye contact may signify deception, rudeness, defiance, or indicates the end of a conversation. White Americans are generally honest, open, and frank in their communication. Often, they call a person by his or her first name. A comfortable distance for a social conversation is about 2 feet.[55] Greeting consists of a handshake.

View of Individualism/Social Interaction "One of America's trademarks is the concept of individualism—a belief in individual rights and dignity inherent in such principles as capitalism, democracy, and religious liberty."[56] With this philosophy, White Americans believed that they were responsible for their own lives and possessed powers within them to overcome any obstacle. "Rugged Individualism" according to J. H. Katz, is a major component of white culture. The individual is the primary unit. Independence and autonomy are highly valued and rewarded. Furthermore, White Americans are generally action

53 See note 52 above, p. 173.

54 Kathy Archer, et. al., **A Journey of the Aging Across Culture:** A Three-Part Lecture presented at the 40th Annual Meeting of the American Society on Aging, San Francisco, CA, May 19-22, 1994.

55 See note 7, p. 4.

56 Nelson Hultberg, **Individualism Strengths America,** AMERICAN VALUES: OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS, 1995, Greenhaven Press Inc., San Diego, CA, p. 29.

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oriented. They believe that they must always do something about a situation.[57]

The idea of individual liberty began with the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. Personal independence for all Americans became the envy of other countries, luring many people from all over the globe to immigrate to the U.S.[58]

White Americans follow rules of privacy and consideration; they are concerned about not disturbing others. This extends to their attitudes about private property, which they treat with great respect.[59]

Materialism/Success Another value is a strong work ethic—commonly called the Protestant work ethic. Historically, America was built by religious people—Scottish Protestants, Italian Catholics, enterprising Jewish immigrants, and others. Work ethics "drive people to work harder, to be productive, to create, and to accumulate the results of their labor."[60] Economic possessions, credentials, titles, and positions are considered measures of status and power.[61] Material possessions are considered to be the benefits of hard work.

Concept of Time Time is considered as a valuable commodity that can be saved, lost, and wasted. White Americans take deadlines and schedules seriously. Schedules are planned and followed in detail. This has enabled Americans to be extremely productive.[62]

Volunteerism To many White Americans, volunteerism is an important aspect of life. Many of them do volunteer work before and after retirement. Many nonprofit organizations rely on volunteers to achieve their goals and objectives.

The next section compares the values held by White Americans with those held by other ethnic groups.

57 See note 50.

58 See note 56, p. 34.

59 G. Harry Stine, **The Alternate View, Cultural Differences,** Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact, September 1987, p. 3.

60 Charles Colson and Jack Eckered, **America Has Lost Its Work Ethic,** American Values: Opposing Viewpoints, Greenhaven Press Inc., San Diego, CA, pp. 63-64.

61 See note 50.

62 Robert Carter, **Cultural Values: A Review of Empirical Research and Implications for Counseling,** Journal of Counseling and Development, September/October 1991, Volume 70, p. 165.

Cultural Values/ Beliefs/Practices

These values may apply to most but not to all White Americans and minority groups. Certain factors such as immigration, history, location, place of birth, education, socioeconomic status, etc., have produced differences between ethnically similar communities and even members of the same community. This information may serve as general background to help understand general beliefs of people from diverse groups.

Note: The numbers are applicable to:

1 – American Indians

2 – African Americans

3 – Asians and Pacific Islanders

4 – Hispanics/Latinos

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1- J. H. Katz, **The Sociopolitical Nature of Counseling,** The Counseling Psychologist, 13 (4), 1985, p. 618.

2- Robert Kohls, **Values People Live By,** Meridian International House, 1984, p.16.

3- Jane Lin-Fu, MD, **Comparison of Common Cultural Values,** Asian American and Pacific Islander Journal of Health, Autumn 1994, Vol. 2, p. 295.

4- Tulin DiversiTeam Associates, **Diversity Without Adversity in a Time of Turmoil,** San Francisco, CA, March 11-14.

5- Chareundi Van Si, **Understanding Southeast Asian Cultures,** Asian American United Press, OR, 1992, pp. 26-27.

White Americans	Minority Groups
• Individualism and independence	Family/group orientation and interdependence (1,2,3,4)
• Personal control	Fate (2,3,4)
• Personal privacy	Openness, accessibility (1,2,3,4)
• Time is to be controlled "on" time	Time is fluid, malleable "in" time (1,2,3,4)
• Equality/Egalitarianism	Hierarchy/rank/status (1,3,4)
• Emotional expressiveness	Emotional restraint (1,3)
• Future orientation	Present/past orientation (1,2,3)
• Competition	Cooperation (1,2,3,4)
• Informality	Formality (1,2,3,4)
• Active involvement	Passive, observation, emulation (1,3)
• Communication: linear, direct, explicit	Circular, indirect, implicit (2,3,4)
• Man should conquer nature	Man is part of nature (1,2,3,4)
• Hopeful, optimistic	Accepting, fatalistic (1,2,3,4)
• Task emphasis	Social emphasis, human relations (1,2,3,4)
• Change (improvement, growth, progress)	Tradition/continuity/stability (1,2,3)
• Youth	Elders (1,2,3)
• Self-help	Birthright inheritance (1,3,4)

Tips for Building Bridges

Learning to work and live with people of other cultures is a challenge. People bring their own values and beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions into relationships. Accepting and appreciating these things in others will help build good relationships between people of all cultures. Here are some ideas about how to "build bridges" with others:

- ***Cultivate your knowledge*** of and experience with diverse cultures. Not only is this essential for your own effectiveness, it also makes you a role model for others.
- ***Talk openly*** and without judgment about racial and ethnic attitudes and their origins. This helps people be more at ease and more able to take in new information.
- ***Point out the positive aspects*** of a particular ethnic group rather than the negative ones. For example, "Asians respect their elders and have strong family ties."
- ***Avoid sweeping statements*** such as "They all…" or "They always…"
- ***Build empathy*** through "walking in the other person's shoes" and helping heighten awareness too. (Those who feel understood and respected as they are can be more open to change.)
- ***Acknowledge feelings*** — fear, hurt, distrust, awkwardness, anxiety — as a first step in healing and building bridges.

- ***Help people*** who are different from each other (or see themselves as different) connect as individual human beings by sharing experiences and feelings.
- ***Approach people who are different with curiosity*** instead of fear or anxiety. Develop an attitude of "I wonder what I could learn from this person?"
- ***Develop and use allies*** — people of other races can collaborate with you on mutual goals.
- ***Create opportunities*** to learn about other cultures and value different ways of seeing/doing things.
- ***Move from dualistic thinking*** (one culture is right, another wrong) to multi-culturalism (valuing differences).
- ***Giving and receiving*** feedback is important.
- ***Give feedback directly*** to the person concerned, not through others. The more people a message goes through, the more likely it is to be distorted.
    - ***Be specific.*** For example, "When you tell jokes that put women down, I feel offended."
    - ***Use first-person statements.*** "I am offended by that remark" is likely to make the receiver less defensive than "You offended me with that remark."

37

Suggested Readings

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